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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/25/2020
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SL](#)
SUBJECT: SIERRA LEONE GIVES 100,000 DOLLARS FOR HAITI
RELIEF, PREPARED TO DO MORE.

Classified By: DCM Glenn Fedzer for reason 1.4 (b/d)

¶1. (U) Foreign Minister Zainab Bangura discussed President Koroma's offer of 100,000 dollars in cash for Haitian earthquake relief during a courtesy call with CDA January 21, saying the money was to "pay back" the international community for all it had done for Sierra Leone. She added that Sierra Leone was prepared, if asked, to provide manpower (either police officers or peacekeeping troops) to answer any additional requirements in Haiti. Bangura also noted that Sierra Leone had volunteered a battalion for the AU peacekeeping operation in Somalia, but in the end was unable to provide the unit due to a lack of donor support to purchase equipment.

¶2. (C) Minister Bangura's comments reflect the sentiment, held by President Koroma and many other Sierra Leoneans that Sierra Leone needs to get beyond its troubled past and rejoin the rest of the world. Despite the token amount, the donation has emotional significance, and has been a dominant topic of discussion among many in Freetown. Some papers have been critical of the gift, noting that the money is needed here, but the need to "pay back" the international community has overridden those concerns, and it appears that the general consensus is favorable. Political support for troop or police deployments could also be expected.

¶3. (C) Comment continued: Bangura appears to be unaware that the lack of support for a contribution to the AU mission in Somalia was driven by consensus among donors, including the Embassy, that the Sierra Leonean Army is not ready yet: such a commitment requires three trained battalions (with one deployed, one preparing to deploy, and the last undergoing recovery operations) and Sierra Leone has barely been able to support a one company rotation to Darfur. It is encouraging that Sierra Leone has the will to help stabilize other African countries, but it will take a bit more time for it to have the capacity to be able to do so.

CHESHES